

AROUND THE CORPS IN BRIEF

Marines take fight to streets of Fallujah

FALLUJAH, Iraq — Marines battling enemy forces in Iraq pushed into this city after several days of violent and deadly clashes in early April.

Marines with Company E, 2nd Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment, established a forward base of operations inside Fallujah in order to battle back the foreign terrorists and former regime loyalists holed up in pockets throughout the city.

Outside of the walled compound, the distinctive “pop, pop, pop” of AK-47 assault rifles could be heard in the distance.

On the rooftops, Marines with M-240G machine guns and M-16A4 service rifles open fire in response to hidden insurgents.

The Company E grunts first moved into Fallujah on April 6. The push into the urban area came after enemy forces from a nearby mosque targeted the Marines’ defensive positions on the city’s edge. By sunset, Marines moved their foothold into the city.

Company E Marines finally settled on a group of abandoned houses as their base of operations.

Searches of the structures turned up photographs of deposed dictator Saddam Hussein and his family, as well as documents and weapons used in attacks against Marines.

Marines in this section of Fallujah haven’t sat idle behind walls, though. Foot-patrols through the surrounding neighborhoods continue, supporting M-1A1 tanks and directing fire from Air Force AC-130 Spectre gunships.

Marines battle poverty in local orphanage

KRTSANISI, Georgia — Marines and soldiers from the Georgia Train and Equip Program spent their free-time two Saturdays in-a-row recently delivering supplies and toys to some of Georgia’s most precious citizens.

After collecting over 1000 lari, approximately \$500, from GTEP personnel, 10 volunteers delivered 400 blankets, 200 cots, sheets, portable heaters, school supplies, clothes and toys to over 200 orphans in the cities of Telavi and Rustavi.

The number of donations amazed the directors at both orphanages who repeated phrases like, “So much, it’s just so much,” and, “We can’t thank you American’s enough.”

After unloading three flatbed trucks full of donations at both locations, the Marines and soldiers spent a few hours playing games with the children.

“The kids were an absolute riot! They were all smiles and laughs and I was glad to be a part of that,” said Army Spc. Jonathan Ferraro, after playing soccer with orphans from Telavi on March 27.

Each trip took the Marines and soldiers away from Tbilisi, the capital of Georgia, where the citizens were accustomed to seeing Marines and soldiers in and around town, in the hopes that the efforts would leave a lasting impression on Georgians throughout the country.

Multinational Interim Force aids workers

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti — Emergency medical personnel from Combined Joint Task Force – Haiti and Marine Air Ground Task Force-8 responded to an accident involving an overturned truck filled with approximately 50 local workers here April 8.

Members of the Multinational Interim Force rushed to the scene near the Task Force’s compound that left two seriously injured and others with fractures, bruises and abrasions.

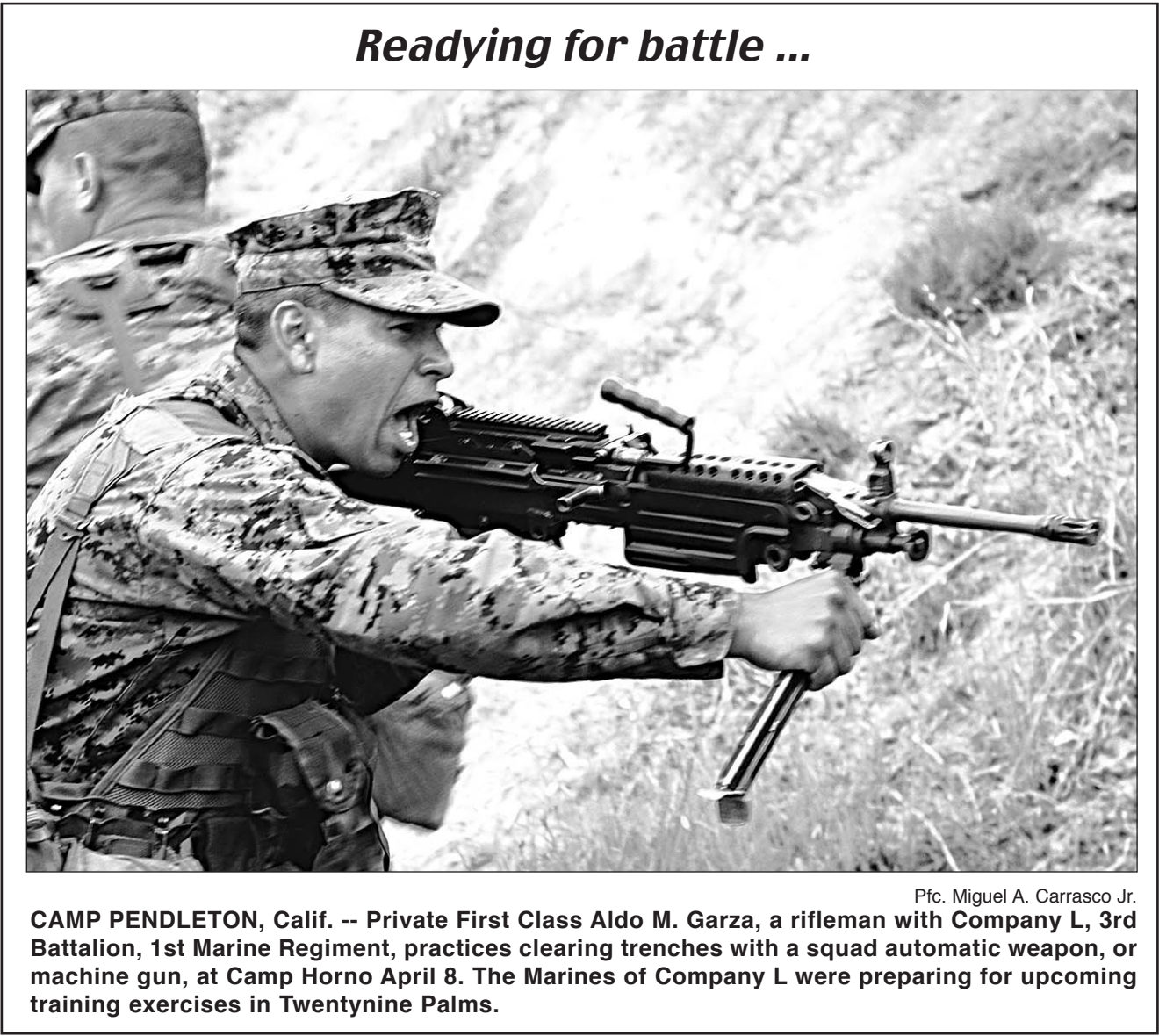
Service members arriving on the scene assessed the injuries, provided onsite aid and transported 14 of the injured to the Task Force’s “triage unit” in military ambulances.

“It took us less than seven minutes to respond once we got the call,” said Petty Officer 2nd Class Quinn Goodson, Surgical Company C, one of the first on scene.

Thirty-six other passengers and bystanders with minor injures were escorted into the compound where they received treatment from not only U.S. medical personnel but Canadian and Chilean personnel as well.

The cooperation of these forces enabled them to rapidly assess and treat all the injured and provide them with immediate essential treatment.

As the injured were assessed and



CAMP PENDLETON, Calif. -- Private First Class Aldo M. Garza, a rifleman with Company L, 3rd Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment, practices clearing trenches with a squad automatic weapon, or machine gun, at Camp Horno April 8. The Marines of Company L were preparing for upcoming training exercises in Twentynine Palms.

treated, 17 patients with more critical injuries were evacuated in military ambulances to a local hospital.

San Diego finishes strong in rifle matches

MCRD SAN DIEGO — The 2004 Western Division Matches awards ceremony was held April 2 at Edson Range, Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif.

The individual rifle and pistol competition was held as a two-day event, March 30 and 31, and team competition commenced April 1.

Sergeant Raymond L. Browne, primary marksmanship instructor, Weapons and Field Training Battalion, Camp Pendleton, Calif., earned recognition with a handful of medals and trophies for his accomplishments.

Browne won highest-scoring first-year novice tyro competitor in rifle and pistol.

He won several badges that represent credit points toward distinguished shooting. He won his first gold badge for rifle for second place; he won his first silver badge for his second place pistol, and first for rifle and pistol team matches. Additionally, Browne received two Secretary of the Navy trophies, which were M-1 rifles for individual rifle and pistol matches.

In team competition, Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego took first place in both rifle and pistol, earning the San Diego Trophy and the Holcomb Trophy.

For the second time, Camp Pendleton’s Edson Range hosted and supported the Western Division Matches and approximately 100 Marine and civilian competitors in both rifle and pistol competition.

Marines score with soccer match in Iraq

NUKHAYB, Iraq — Marines from 3rd Battalion, 11th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division spent a little time playing soccer with citizens from this small Iraqi community April 6.

Nearly 50 artillerymen of Battery I played soccer until the sun went down, but winning the game wasn’t the goal at the end of the day, according to 2nd Lt. Robert L. Nofsinger, the battalion civil affairs officer.

Battery I Marines operate from Camp Mudaysis, a one-hour drive from the city, located slightly north of the Saudi Arabian border.

During the visit, they also distributed 30 boxes of medical supplies and sporting goods donated by Spirit of America, a Los Angeles-based charity.

During the invasion of Iraq last year, Nukhayb was demolished and the 10,000 Iraqis living here had little hope of recuperating, explained Mayor Thamir Mayflal Hatham.

“After the war ended many of our buildings were ransacked and looted,” Hatham explained. “The people had to start from the zero level. We rebuilt our schools, hospitals, police stations and government offices.”

The mayor said the people of his city had a great deal of support from other countries, including America.

The Marines from 3rd Battalion,

Readying for battle ...

11th Marines are looking to keep the friendly relationship with the people here strong.

Commanding General visits troops in Haiti

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti — The 2nd Marine Division commanding general visited troops here supporting Operation Secure Tomorrow during a three-day visit April 5-7.

With the majority of the Marines serving here deployed from the 2nd Marine Division, the visit gave Maj. Gen. Stephen T. Johnson the opportunity to see first hand the living conditions, training and operations of his forces.

“Sergeant Major Himsworth (2nd Marine Division Sergeant Major) and I came down to see the Marines,” Johnson explained. “We came to see them, see what conditions they are living under, what training we might be able to help them with, and seeing if there are any problems we might be able to solve.”

According to Col. Mark Gurganus, the MAGTF commander, the visit gave the general situational awareness of what is going on in Haiti.

“It lets him get a firsthand look at our issues so he can lend his weight as the commanding general,” he explained. “And he can go back and give his boss (the 2d Marine Expeditionary Force Commanding General) a good read on what is going well and what is not going well.

“It also gives him the opportunity to witness techniques, tactics and procedures we are using in this environment, which he can take back and pass along,” Gurganus explained. “This may be valuable for other units preparing for Operation Iraqi Freedom.”

During his visit, 2nd Marine Division’s commanding general visited all of the Marines’ firm bases, the Combat Service Support Detachment, the 3rd Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment’s headquarters, the Marine Air Ground Task Force-8’s headquarters, Marines located in both Bel Air and Cite Soleil districts, the Marines and Sailors from HMLA-269, as well as the Marines at the National Palace and prime minister’s residence.

Boxing returns to Hawaii after 2 years

MCB HAWAII, Kaneohe Bay — For the past two years, the sport of boxing had taken a complete hiatus from here, but recently USA Boxing opened a chapter aboard the base that is free and available to all service members who want to learn the sport, or who want to compete on the base team, currently boasting about 20 full-time members.

Jack Johnson, the career planner with 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, was a member of the boxing team here two years ago. After getting reassigned to MCB Hawaii recently, the former Golden Gloves fighter decided to rebuild the old club. He now serves as the head trainer and resident expert to all things boxing.

The new club is located across the flight line in a renovated storage building that’s now packed to the walls with punching and speed bags, and other types of equipment to build expert pugilists.

The new club welcomes members of all abilities to come out and train with boxing experts. The training can be intense; however, dedicated box

ers are some of the toughest athletes in the world, said Johnson.

Anyone can become a proficient boxer: Technique and training ultimately win out over natural ability, so it’s really a sport for anyone, Johnson believes. On average, he said, a boxer can be ready for his first bout in two months - if he or she is passionate about fighting.

“We’re lucky to have such a facility here,” said Richard Ransom, an eight-year veteran of the sport and section leader from Marine Corps Air Facility’s Aircraft Rescue and Firefighting unit. “This really is the best I’ve ever trained in.”

Marines alter training amidst controversy

MAKUA MILITARY RESERVATION, Hawaii — Marines from India Company, 3rd Battalion 3rd Marine Regiment, known as “America’s Battalion,” were deep inside the reservation here, April 9, to practice live-fire operations in a unique capacity that cannot be found anywhere else in Hawaii. But even the tough training going on in the valley may not prove to be as difficult as simply getting permission to use the area.

After putting forth a training package proposal that was approved by U.S. Army officials and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, both of which run Makua Valley, EarthJustice (a nonprofit public interest law firm) and the Hawaii-based cultural preservation group Malama Makua filed a motion with a federal judge to stop the Marines from training at Makua.

The groups claimed that training proposed by the Marines violated specific agreements made by the Army to limit the quantity of troops and ordnance that could be used in the training area. More specifically, they argued the Marines had planned to fire too many mortars and SMAW (shoulder-fired multi-purpose assault weapon) rounds, which would create an undue fire hazard.

Though Hawaii has had one of the wettest winters in memory for some, and Makua Valley is more green and lush than at any time in recent memory, the fear of fire was enough to convince the federal judge to rule against the Marines’ proposed training package.

The Marines altered their training to meet the judge’s ruling, so that they could still get in some of the vital training, although not the complete package commanders hoped to provide their Marines.

“It’s the U.S. Army’s range, and we are going to follow whatever guidelines and regulations that the Army prescribes for us,” said Marine spokesperson Maj. Chris Hughes. “However, it is important to remember that Makua Valley is the cultural site and home to endangered and threatened plants and species because of the Army’s management, not in spite of it.”

*Compiled by the
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PORT-AU-PRINCE – A medical officer from Combined Joint Task Force – Haiti, treats a local Haitian worker’s injuries after a dump truck carrying nearly 50 people overturned near the task forces compound. The accident left two seriously wounded and others with fractures bruises and abrasions.